

Recognizing the Importance of General Aviation

July 28, 2009

Madame Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 508, which recognizes the general aviation industry for its many and valuable contributions to our country. As a member of the Congressional General Aviation Caucus and as a representative from Kansas, I have special appreciation for the contributions of this industry.

In Kansas, the aviation industry accounts for about 20 percent of the state's manufacturing employment and employs tens of thousands of Kansans. Nationwide, the general aviation industry employs nearly 1.3 million people and contributes more than \$150 billion to U.S. direct and indirect economic output.

While these numbers are impressive and significant, the industry's impact on our economy is even greater than the value of the products it produces.

General aviation connects businesses and facilitates economic growth. It is estimated that 65 percent of general aviation flights are conducted for business and public services. Especially for businesses located in rural communities that do not have access to commercial aviation, general aviation aircraft help American businesses stay connected with customers and allow companies in small towns to compete across the country.

It is important that my colleagues understand this. I was troubled in January during consideration of the TARP Reform and Accountability Act, that provisions to limit businesses from leasing or using general aircraft for business purposes were almost included in the final legislation. Doing so would have hampered economic activity, lowered national aviation production, and hurt workers everywhere, but especially in Kansas, where a large portion of our country's aviation products are manufactured. Congress must remember the importance of the general aviation industry to not only our national economy but to so many local and regional economies within the country.

That is why I am pleased that we are taking up this resolution today. Like most all industries, general aviation has not been spared by the recession. During difficult times like these, it is especially important for Congress to support general aviation. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and oppose any future proposal that would damage the general aviation industry.